

## **SOPA Planning Group / Members' Meeting**

**11am - 1pm, Wednesday 12th May 2021**

The meeting was held via zoom.

### **Minutes**

**Participating:** Diana Findley (chair), David Paterson, Jimmy Miller, Harriette Campbell, Matt Hamilton, Sam Gibson, Jo Cowan, Alan Sidaway, Catriona Mason, Betty Milton, Maryan Whyte, Ian Donald, Denis O'Keefe, Jim McGuigan, Ann Keating, Elaine Thornton-Nicol, Mukami McCrum, Bella Kerr,

**Apologies:** Carl Bow, Chris Grant, Eileen Wallace, Christine Wilson, John White, Sandra Wilson, Anne Munro, Louise Brown-Nicholls, Jim McMahan,

**In attendance:** Caroline Clark (minutes)

#### **1. Welcome**

The Chair warmly welcomed everyone to the Planning Group meeting

**2. Introductions** were made around the group and apologies recorded

**3. Minutes of previous meeting** – 10 February 2021 - approved ID, CM

#### **4. Matters arising not on the Agenda**

None

#### **5. SOPA updates and feedback**

##### **5.1 Health and Wellbeing Group**

DP chairs a small group looking at issues relating to health and wellbeing. An initial focus has been access to healthcare during the pandemic – primary care, mental health services and dentistry as the groups was aware of issues many older people were experiencing. A survey was launched to gather views on this topic and over 800 responses have now been received. The survey will close on 18 May and a report will be produced.

A second topic of care services has begun. The group is considering the implications of the recent Independent Review of Adult Social Care on three areas – homecare, residential services and day care.

##### **5.2 Older People's Champions**

The joint campaign between SOPA and Age Scotland has seen an increase in the number of older people's champions from 6 in 2019 to 13 in May 2021 (12 in post, West Lothian yet to appoint). Midlothian appointed a champion most recently, and Diana has been invited to speak at a meeting of Angus Council tomorrow where a motion to appoint a champion is being considered. *(This was approved, so now 14 champions, an up to date list, with contact details, is maintained on Age Scotland's website at <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/our-impact/campaigns/older-peoples-champions/contact-details-opc/>)*

Members are encouraged to continue to campaign in areas where no champion has been appointed. SG noted that he will be trying to activate the champion in North Lanarkshire. BM noted that she has been asking her local councillor in Edinburgh to raise the matter, which she has been assured is happening. DF referred to a recent meeting with herself, Brian Sloan, the Edinburgh Council Leader and Chief Executive where further information about the role was shared.

A gathering for all older people's champions has been arranged by Age Scotland and SOPA in June.

JMcG noted that older people are a large proportion of the voting population so councillors should listen to their views.

AS asked about contact with the Dumfries and Galloway champion. CC noted that no apologies have yet been made for the June gathering so hopefully he will attend. ETN said that she would make contact with him and pass on AS's details.

JM noted that champions must have regular contact with older people, with structures in place to support dialogue, like they have in North Ayrshire. Champions must act, not just hold the position.

CM noted that she is working with JMcG on a feature on the good work underway in South Lanarkshire between the champion, Senior's Together and the Council. This will be shared with other areas soon.

ID noted that East Lothian has a new spokesperson on Health and Social Care and he will pick up the matter with them as there is no champion role.

ETN noted that she has passed on the Role Descriptor to East Lothian and will continue to push her counterparts.

### **5.3 SOPA Manifesto**

The manifesto was shared widely and feedback was received from a number of politicians who thanked SOPA and supported our calls for action. Comments were also received about the clear layout and accessibility of the document. The manifesto was also shared with SCVO who added it to their compilation of third sector manifestos on their website <https://tfn.scot/news/holyrood-2021-what-the-voluntary-sector-wants>

### **5.4 Funding**

SOPA's main funding from the Scottish Government ends in September 2021. A new fund has been established, the Equalities and Human Rights Fund, to which SOPA is applying for 3 years funding. The deadline is this Friday 14 May.

Theresa Casey continues to develop bids for Age-friendly Communities work.

SOPA Trustees agreed to pay for some additional fundraising work and someone with the required skills, experience and time has been commissioned for 10 days work over the next few weeks.

BM supported the importance of fundraising but was frustrated that SOPA had previously had its funding cut when hearing older people's voices is so important. DP noted his caution in paying someone to do fundraising work. DO'K is supportive in getting someone to do it properly, noting that you need to use the language required by funders.

## 5.5 Strathclyde University partnership

CC noted that SOPA has been asked to support an ESRC application being submitted by Strathclyde University, the third in a series of pieces of research into aspects of healthy ageing.

MW suggested that as a partner, SOPA should request funding to support such work.

## 6. Plans for 2021

### 6.1 Reconnecting Our Communities

An East Lothian focused event is planned for 25 May 2021. Around 40 people have registered to attend, including many people that have not attended a SOPA event before.

### 6.2 Future events

Further events are being arranged with:

- Highland Senior Citizen's Network – September 2021
- U3A – October 2021
- Unforgotten Forces – possible event, or SOPA's involvement has been requested for a podcast – CC asked anyone who would be interested in being involved to get in touch. AS suggested contacting Archie Dryburgh – Dumfries and Galloway Veteran's Champion.

## 7. Updates from member organisations

### U3A

AK noted that she was pleased to be part of a meeting with diverse people from a wide range of organisations. U3A is often seen as white and middle class, but it is for anyone who is interested in learning and keeping active, they want to reach out. She asked SOPA members to let their members know about U3A online groups that have been active during lockdown <https://www.u3a.org.uk/> and local groups will be starting up again in the coming months. There are groups for every interest from walking to wine tasting. It's about fun, learning and social connections.

DO'K noted that he was struggling to engage many older members in becoming digitally connected. AK said that the Third Age Trust website has a lot of resources to support people to get online.

SG said that he looked at U3A groups local to him but found many groups were full. AK suggested that he could set up a group, U3A provide support to do this.

HC asked whether someone from U3A would be willing to speak to the African Caribbean Elders Scotland group. AK would be delighted to. **CC to share AK email address with HC.**

### Parkhead and Sighthill Community Council

BM gave an update on the work of her local group to address loneliness and isolation during the pandemic.

### Retired Police Officers Association Scotland

MH noted the health and wellbeing strategy and service recently launched by his organisation for retired police officers. Thirteen people have been trained who will signpost RPOAS members to support services. They currently have 6,500 members but are trying to grow this number.

### **Maryan Whyte**

MW gave an update on her work with the Whyte Family Trust which is working to ensure the provision of comforting and compassionate family friendly bereavement suites across Scotland. She noted the Scottish Bereavement Charter which was published in April 2020 and she is working to get employees to adopt the charter. [www.sad.scot.nhs.uk/bereavement-charter/](http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk/bereavement-charter/)

### **Association of East Lothian Day Centres**

ID noted that in relation to the Maryan's update, North Berwick is one of 3 areas of the country involved in the Truacante pilot. [www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/blogs/truacanta/](http://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/blogs/truacanta/)

Day centres are starting to open up as restrictions are eased, however with reduced numbers and outreach activities continue. There is a huge need to support people's mobility which for many older people has reduced during lockdown. They are using trained walkers and walking groups to help people to get out and about again.

### **Unite Retired Members Association, Dumfries**

AS noted the challenges he has faced recently with banking for his organisation following the death of their president and chairman, trying to change signatories and make any payments has been very difficult. They needed to organise a meeting to agree changes, but many people do not use Zoom.

### **Highland Senior Citizens Network**

JC informed of the weekly online tea break that their group has been running. Also, the Lochaber radio programme, which she invited SOPA to feature in. JC also noted that they are also part of the Truacante project.

### **Seniors Together (South Lanarkshire)**

CM gave an update, they have received money for 20 Fitbits which they are using to support people to remobilise after lockdown.

### **African Caribbean Elders Scotland**

MMcC noted that a directory of walking group for older people would be a useful resource. She also gave an update on fortnightly gatherings of her group via Zoom, a chance to catch up and also with a focus on different cultures.

MMcC also noted that many older people are struggling with banking. JMCG suggested that his experience of the Coop Bank which uses Post Office facilities, has been fairly positive customer service compared to other banks.

### **Voice of Experience Forum (North Lanarkshire)**

DO'K informed that VoE are partnering with Living Streets on an Out and About project to improve their neighbourhoods. He has also been developing online resources on social security benefits and

power of attorney. Whilst he is working to encourage digital inclusion, he acknowledged that people need to have other options.

*BREAK*

## **8. Presentation and discussion: Alex Thorburn**

Alex gave a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt about how human rights meaningfully operate at a very local level in people's lives and noted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted after World War II.

Scotland is currently incorporating a number of UN conventions of rights into Scots Law. The Bill to incorporate the Rights of the Child was passed in March 2021, however Westminster is challenging that it encroaches on areas outwith the Scottish Parliament's competency and the matter is now with the Supreme Court to decide. Plans are to follow with the convention of Economic, Social and Cultural rights, and Disability Rights.

Alex highlighted that there is no convention of human rights for older people, and this is perhaps surprising given the growing older population and also the discrimination that they often face.

He stated that organisations such as SOPA are important in challenging negative images of older age and standing up for the rights of older people. There may be an opportunity for SOPA to influence the Universal Periodic Review which takes place every 4 years.

Alex provided some background on his work with the Lived Experience Leadership Group which is now part of the Human Rights Commission and is currently recruiting people with lived experience. He also reflected that the Scottish Government has come to value the voice of lived experience over the last few years, as he has seen in his work with the People-led Policy Panel which has been involved in the Review of Adult Social Care. He feels that the work of this panel has been a good example of true co-production where they have been treated as equals and have been involved in decision making.

DP asked whether any reports from the [People-led Policy Panel](#) on the reform of adult social care could be shared, as this could inform the work of SOPA's Health and Wellbeing group. **AT to share any relevant reports with DP.**

MW asked whether Alex had any information about the human rights of the deceased? People make decisions about what they want to happen to them after they die, but are their wishes protected by human rights?

Power of attorney was further discussed as an issue related to rights and the capacity of people to make decisions. Unfortunately, there are people who try to take advantage of these processes for their own gain, an example of a case where a power of attorney was overridden by a solicitor for significant gain.

**8. Date of next meeting: 11 August, 10 November 2021**

**9. Any Other Business – none.**

The Scottish Older People's Assembly is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation: Number - SC046520